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A GUIDE  
TO  
IRISH DANCING

BY

J. J. SHEEHAN

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JOHN DENVIR  
LONDON: 61 FLEET STREET, E.C.  
DUBLIN & NEW YORK

—  
1902

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# The Irish in Britain

BY

**JOHN DENVIR.**

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PRINTED BY

SEALY, BRYERS AND WALKER

MIDDLE ABBEY STREET,

DUBLIN.

PRINTED 70

June 12, 1913

(Included in O'Reiffe's  
Handbook)

# A GUIDE TO IRISH DANCING.

## CHAPTER I.

### Irish Dancing.

“ Beiró pléimeadáct gacá lae ’gúinn a’r aoiúnear,  
Beiró féarfa, beiró faince agusf ceol,  
A’r céile ma’r méinn leat fán oiróče,  
A’r a n-éigic beirí cóna beiri ós.”—

Sean Ó hUáin.

ALTHOUGH it would be impossible to treat of the historical aspect of Irish dancing in the limits allowed by this little volume, a few remarks on the better-known dances may not be amiss.

To the jig must be awarded the honour of being our oldest national dance; and there cannot be any doubt that of all the dances known in Ireland at the present day the jig has the best title to the description “ traditional.”

O’Curry suggested that the word “ jig ” was derived from the Italian “ gigue,” and thereupon many people who ought to have known better assumed that the jig had an Italian origin. It is easy to see how the mistake arose.

Hardiman tells us (quoting Tassoni) that the ancient music of Ireland was *imitated* by Gesualdus, the “ chief of the Italian composers and greatest musical improver

of the sixteenth century"—a fact which ought to be sufficient to dispose of the "Italian origin" theory regarding the jig. As if that were not enough, one English authority states that the first known dance tune in English, dating back to 1300, was a kind of jig, and it is certain the English didn't invent it.

Through the Italian composers, however, jigs became very popular throughout Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and were even greatly in favour at the court of "Good Queen Bess" herself—a mark of royal favour for which, no doubt, all Irishmen will feel fittingly grateful.

The Irish title to the reel is not quite so clear. The Scotch seem to have pretty strong grounds for claiming it as their dance; but as they have been equally energetic in claiming our language, our songs, our music, and our musicians as their own productions, one would be glad of a little more evidence.

The probability is that the reel is neither Irish nor Scotch; but that it came from the north of Europe, where it has for centuries been a dance beloved of the descendants of the old Lochlannach.

The credit of inventing the hornpipe would appear to be due to either Wales or England—most probably to the former.

The hornpipe was, however, well known in Ireland and Scotland in the seventeenth century.

The well-known "Rinnce-fada," or country dance, has a record dating back to the sixteenth century, and probably to an earlier period.

The origin of Irish figure-dancing is not easily ascertainable. While undoubtedly very old, there is a probability that some of the figures in the figure-dancing owe their origin to the French measures which

for a considerable time exerted a powerful influence on the dances of the civilized world.

But one curious point has struck me which may be worthy of note. The movements described in Irish figure-dancing bear a strong resemblance to the intricate interlacing ornament which is such a marked feature of early Irish art. It would almost seem as if the same artistic mind had inspired both. It may be only a coincidence; but, if so, it is a very peculiar one.

Whatever opinions may be held as to Irish figure-dancing, two things may be said—it is distinctively Irish and extremely artistically constructed.

The chance that the build of it may have been at some period influenced by foreign ideas need not detract from its merit. All dancing has at one time or another had to bow to the fashions of the day, and we need not be put about should it be proved (which, up to the present, has not been done) that our Irish dancing has been similarly influenced.

Suffice it to say that it can claim one of the oldest and most distinctive dance histories in Europe; and, indeed, it is doubtful if any European country has ever produced a list of dances so varied, so pleasing, so lively, and so beautiful.

To bí an fírinne a ghréanáilte ó fáthair 'nuaith do rathúioibh ré :—

“ Let foreigners brag and crow  
That dancin's their devotion,  
'Tis little the craychurs know  
Of the poetry of motion;  
Their polkas and quadrilles  
Are nothin' else but prancin',  
An' Irish jigs and reels,  
The king and queen of dancin'.”—

Seán Ó Siadhail.

## CHAPTER II.

**Explanatory.**

This work contains directions for the proper performance of a dozen Irish popular dances. To avoid a wearisome repetition of description each movement has been separately numbered, and where a movement which has once been described occurs in another dance reference is made to it by number.

FOR EXAMPLE :—In 8-hand Jig (A) under the number 103 it says, “Same as movements 70 and 71.” This means that the reader after dancing the movement numbered 102 in this 8-hand Jig, is to dance movements which occur in the 8-hand Reel (B), and are distinguished by the numbers 70 and 71. He then proceeds to dance movement 104 of 8-hand Jig (A).

An effort has been made to construct this work so as to enable persons who have never seen Irish dancing, and who cannot obtain a teacher, to teach themselves. With that object it has been thought advisable to refrain as much as possible from the use of technical terms, and to employ phrases invented by people ignorant of the technical terms, but on that very score often more easily understood by the layman. This object also accounts for what those conversant with the dances described may consider the unnecessary minuteness of detail used.

It may be explained for the benefit of the uninformed

reader, that, although in the descriptions the dances are divided into sections there are no rests such as take place between the figures of an (so-called) English square dance.

Once the measure has been begun somebody is always dancing until its termination.

The build of the first nine dances is as follows ;—

*Lead around*

*Body.*

*1st Figure.*

*Body.*

*1st Figure* by next cp. or cps.

*Body.*

(Repeat according to number of figures.)

*Finish.*

Although at least three figures are here given with each dance it will be generally found that two make the dance sufficiently long for most people.

Very often in the dancing the figures are mixed up in the most indiscriminate fashion, the same figures doing duty for three or four different dances. The writer has taken the liberty of trying to some extent to regularize this by allotting certain figures to each dance (relying on the way they were originally taught), as it would be a pity to allow any of the figures to fall into disuse.

It is hoped at an early date to issue a volume dealing with the more difficult kinds of Irish dancing in which the steps play a more prominent part. Meanwhile should anything in the descriptions following

not appear clear a stamped envelope to the author, care of Mr. John Denvir, 61 Fleet street, London, will ensure a reply to the best of his ability.

The abbreviations "cp." and "cps." stand for "couple" and "couples" respectively.



## CHAPTER III.

### Steps.

Before a dance can be properly performed it is necessary to acquire by practice a knowledge of the steps used in the various parts of it.

The following are the steps danced in the measures herein described. Reference to the particular dance will show where the different steps are employed :—

*Step 1—*              The Lead Round.  
                                (Reel or Jig.)

Count three to the bar.

Step forward with left foot (one), bring right toe to left heel (two), advance left foot, raising right off ground (three) = 1 bar.

Begin again with right, and next time with left, and continue until necessary number of bars have been danced.

*Step 2—*              The Side-step.  
                                (Reel.)

This is in two parts, colloquially known as "the seven" and "the two threes."

*The seven* is so called from counting seven to the two bars.

Gent. jumps (both feet) landing with right foot in advance of left, right heel touching left toe (one) takes a short pace to right (two) brings left toe to right heel (three) repeats the two paces (four, five), and again repeats them (six, seven) = 2 bars.

The step may be described for the benefit of the ordinary reader as a jump and three double paces or "short steps," danced to two bars of a reel, thus—(1st bar)—1,—2, 3 ; (2nd bar)—4, 5,—6, 7.

"*The two threes*" is also two bars—count three to each bar.

The 1st bar—(3rd bar of the side-step).

Jump as at commencement of "*the seven*," landing with left foot foremost (one), take short pace to left (two), bring right toe to left heel (three) = 1 bar.

This will bring the dancer a little way back to his place.

2nd bar—A repetition of last-mentioned bar, but in the opposite direction (beginning with right foot foremost)—will leave dancer in position as at end of "*the seven*."

The step for the lady is the same, but as she has to move to her left first, she begins the "*seven*" on her left foot, and the "*two threes*" on her right.

*Step 3— The "Lead up" or "Advance."*

(Reel or Jig.)

Count three to the bar.

The same as step 1, except that the dancer advances two paces, and retires instead of moving in a circle.

*Step 4—*The Side-step  
(Jig.)

Is like the reel side-step, in two parts.

The step for the first two bars is similar to the reel “seven.”

For the next two bars dance—

*The “rise and grind”*; 3 beats 1st bar; 5 beats 2nd bar.

1st bar (3rd of side-step).

*Rise off.* Hop, landing on left toe with right foot off ground (one), hop again on left toe, bringing right foot (without allowing it to touch the ground) behind left knee (toe), put down right foot behind left (three).

2nd bar.

“*Grind.*” Hop, landing on right toe (one), place left foot down behind right (two) and keeping the feet in that position step on right (three), on left (four), and on right toes (five).

As there are five counts to the bar, the Grind must of course be done very quickly, and makes a pattering sound.

When side-stepping to the left (as the lady begins) the “rise-off” is begun on right foot and finished on left, the “grind” begun and finished on left.

*Step 5—*

## The Set.

(Reel or Jig.)

4 bars. Count three to the bar.

This is hardly a step, rather a gentle swaying motion of the body to right and left alternately.

1st bar. Step gently with a gliding motion on left toe (one), bring right toe in front of it (two), raise left toe and place it down again (three), at the same time swaying the body to the left.

Repeat this to right, to left, and to right again for the remaining three bars.



## CHAPTER IV.

### **Four-Hand Reel (A.)**

DANCED BY TWO COUPLES.

In beginning movements 5, 6, 7, and 8, the gent., in making the first beat of the "seven" (the jump), gives a half turn of his body to the right as he descends, and this leaves him at right angles to the line which he last danced, and in position for continuing the side step in the new direction. The lady makes the half-turn to the left.

In dancing the chain (movement 16) bear in mind that each dancer makes a complete circle—gents. to right, ladies to left—in doing so. The mistake always made by beginners is to turn back around partner when met the first time, thus making only a half circle and return.

#### *Position.*

The cps. stand facing each other, the lady on the right of her partner.

*Lead around.*

1. The gent. takes partner's left hand in his right, holding it a little below the level of his shoulder ; places his left shoulder close to left shoulder of opposite gent. The two cps. at start of music dance around (Step 1) as on a pivot, the ladies outside, until a circle has been danced by both cps. reaching their original places (8 bars).

2. Each gent. releases partner's hand, and turns on right foot to opposite direction—his right shoulder to opposite gent.'s right shoulder. Each lady at same time also reverses by turning on left foot.

Gent. takes lady's right hand in his left, and all dance back as before to their places, where gent. takes both his partners' hands in his (right in right and left in left), and swings with her until the second eight bars have been completed, when he leaves her on his right, as at commencing.

*The Body of the Reel.*

3. The gents. dance the "seven" (Step 2) to right behind partners, who at same moment dance the "seven" to left (2 bars).

This will bring each dancer into the place of his or her partner.

4. Here the two "short steps" (Step 2) are danced (2 bars).

5. All turn sideways and dance the "seven" to the place of the opposite lady or gent., each gent. passing behind opposite lady.

The ladies are thus dancing the seven to their left in front of the gents. who are dancing to their right.

This takes another two bars, and brings each cp into the places first occupied by the other cp.

6. Here, again, the "two-threes" are danced (2 bars).
7. Then the side step is danced again, as in 3 and 4 (4 bars), and
8. Again as in 5 and 6 (4 bars).

Each dancer will now have completed a square, at the four corners of which he or she has danced the "two-threes," and will have returned to his or her own place.

9. Each gent. dances the "seven" to right behind partner, who dances to left (movement 3). (2 bars).

10. Instead of dancing "two-threes," each person dances the "seven" back to place, the gents. this time passing *in front* and the ladies behind (2 bars). These two "sevens" are then repeated (4 bars).

11. Gents. take right hand at level of shoulder.

- Ladies take right hands across gents'. All four dance around (Step 1) to place and release hands (4 bars).

12. Each cp. join hands and swing in their respective places (4 bars).

13. 1st cp holding hands (right in right, left in left) dance the "seven" *together* to place of 2nd cp., passing between them, 2nd cp. at same time dancing the "seven" individually to place of 1st cp., and, of course, passing outside them (2 bars).

14. 1st cp. holding hands, dance the "two-threes," together, the 2nd cp. doing likewise individually (2 bars).

15. Each cp. dances back to place as in 13, and

dances "two-threes" as in 14 (4 bars). 1st cp. release hands.

16. Each gent. gives right hand to opposite lady, taking her right hand, makes a half turn around her, and then releases hands. This will bring him face to face with his own partner, whose left hand he takes in his left and passes inside her, making a half turn to his left.

This brings him to opposite lady again, to whom he gives right hand, and half turns *as before*, and then to his partner (left hand), whom he turns in place.

This chain takes eight bars and completes the body of the reel.

The 1st Figure is then danced.

*1st Figure.*

17. 1st cp. join hands (lady's left in gents' right), advance two steps (Step 3), and retire (4 bars).

18. They join both hands and dance around in place (4 bars).

19 and 20. They repeat 17 and 18 (8 bars).

During this the 2nd cp. do not dance.

The Body is danced again.

*2nd cp. dance 1st Fig.*

The Body of the Reel is danced.

*2nd Figure.*

21. 1st cp. advance to 2nd (2 bars). 1st lady passes between 2nd cp. and turns to her right around 2nd lady (2 bars). 1st gent. gives right hand to partner, taking her left, and left hand to 2nd lady, taking her

right, and both ladies join their other hands, 2nd gent. meanwhile remaining in his place.

The three forming a ring dance around to their left (4 bars).

22. 2nd gent. joins in between the ladies, and all four circle around to the left (4 bars).

23. Each dancer releases opposite dancer's hands, and holding both of partner's hands swings back into place.

Dance Body of Reel.

2nd ep. dance *2nd Figure.*

Dance Body of Reel.

*3rd Figure.*

24. Each gent. advances to opposite lady, whose right hand he takes in his right, and turns around her in her place. Releases hands. Dances back to his own partner (passing to his right of opposite gent on his way), and clasps left hands with her.

Turns around her in her place (8 bars).

25. Releases hands and returns midway, where he meets opposite gent.

Gents. link their right arms and turn around together once. Release arms.

26. Each gent. continues his advance to opposite lady; clasps left hands. Turns around her as before, returns to partner, clasps right hands, and swings in place (8 bars).

(This figure need only be danced once).

The Body is again danced.

*The Finish.*

27. Gents, clasp right hands. Ladies do the same across gents. All four turn around to place (4 bars). Release hands and turn, giving left hands, and repeating movement back again (4 bars).

28. Release hands, take both of partner's hands, and both cpls. dance around each other (8 bars).



## CHAPTER V.

**Four-hand Reel (B).**

## DANCED BY TWO COUPLES.

Not so well known as the first reel, but very pretty.

In movement 35, as there are only four bars allowed for dancing, it has to be danced very quickly.

The passing through opposite cp. (34) should only be for about a yard, and the returning and turning round opposite dancers should be done as smartly as possible.

*Position.*

As in Four-hand Reel (A).

*Lead around.*

*Ditto.*

*Body of Reel.*

29. Movements 3 and 4 (4 bars).

30. Instead of dancing the "seven" down the side, as in the other Four-hand Reel, each gent. takes opposite lady's two hands and swings with her, ending up the swing by stopping in the place first occupied by opposite gent., but placing the lady with whom he has been swinging on his right-hand side.

This swinging takes 4 bars. 1st gent. will be in the place occupied at commencement by 2nd gent, and with 2nd lady by his side in her own place.

2nd gent. will be in the place first occupied by 1st gent. with 1st lady for his partner. It will be seen that gents. change places, but ladies do not.

31. Movements 29 and 30 are repeated (8 bars), which results in all the dancers regaining their first positions.

32. 1st cp. join hands and dance the "seven" between 2nd cp., who side-step individually to place of 1st cp. This movement is the same as movements 13 and 14, with the exception that instead of coming back to places between 2nd cp., 1st cp. release hands and dance back individually outside 2nd cp., who join hands and dance back together to their places.

In this movement 1st cp. always "dance through" first.

33. Chain as in other Four-hand Reel (Movement 16).

#### *1st Figure.*

34. 1st gent. takes partner's left hand in his right ; they advance and pass between 2nd cp. who remain in their places (4 bars). Release hands.

35. 1st gent. turns sharply round on right foot, and 1st lady on left foot. Join hands (gent's. left and lady's

right). Return to 2nd cp. Release hands. 1st gent. clasps right hands with 2nd lady, and turns around her. Simultaneously his partner does same with 2nd gent., using left hands. This brings 1st cp. together again between 2nd cp. 1st cp. release hands of opposite cp., and joining their own hands (gent's. left and lady's right) dance back together to place (4 bars).

36. 1st cp. advance again as in Movement 34, but instead of dancing through opposite cp. they release hands on reaching them (4 bars).

37. First gent. clasps left hands with 2nd lady ; 1st lady clasps right hands with 2nd gent, and 1st cp. pass together (but without joining hands) between 2nd cp. 1st gent. turns to right around 2nd lady ; 1st lady turns to left around 2nd gent., and they dance back individually to place (4 bars).

### *2nd Figure.*

38. 1st gent. takes 2nd lady by both hands, and they dance the "seven" and "two threes" to gents.' right, between the other two dancers, who remain in their places (4 bars). Release hands.

39. 1st gent. takes partner's left hand in his left, and turns right around her; at the same time, 2nd lady clasps right hands with her partner and turns around him (4 bars).

40. 1st gent. and 2nd lady thus meet again, and joining hands they repeat movements 38 and 39 to the gents.' left, 1st gent. clasping right hands with partner and 2nd lady left hands with partner when turning.

*3rd Figure.*

41. Both ladies advance, clasp right hands, release and pass on, take opposite gent's. left hand, turn around him and release his hand, take opposite lady's right hand, release and pass on, take partner's left hand, turn around him into place (8 bars).

42. Each cp. join both hands, dance around opposite cp., and back to place (8 bars).

(This Figure need only be danced once.)

*Finish.*

43. Same as Four-hand Reel (A).



## CHAPTER VI.

**Eight-hand Reel (A).**

DANCED BY FOUR COUPLES.

A Very Picturesque Dance.

In dancing the end of movement 50 and beginning of 51 there is no stop, each gent. taking his partner's hand as he passes her.

*Position.*

The couples take positions as for a square dance (*i.e.*, a set of quadrilles or lancers). 1st cp. at

top, 2nd cp. at bottom facing 1st ; 3rd cp. on right of 1st., and 4th cp. on left of 1st and facing 3rd.

### *Lead around.*

The lead around is the same as in the four-hand reels, with the difference, that four couples are leading instead of two. (16 bars).

### *Body of Reel.*

44. Each gent. takes partner's left hand in his right. 1st cp. dance the "seven" together to place of 3rd cp., passing behind them as they simultaneously dance to place of 1st cp. At the same time 2nd and 4th cps. similarly change places, 2nd cp. passing behind 4th whilst doing so. (2 bars.)

1st cp. will now be in the place originally occupied by 3rd, 2nd in that of 4th, 3rd in that of 1st, and 4th in that of 2nd.

45. All dance the "two threes." (2 bars.)

46. Each cp. dance the "seven" back to their own place—1st cp. this time passing in front of 3rd and 2nd in front of 4th. (2 bars.)

47. Having reached places the "two threes" are danced. (2 bars.)

48. Movements 44 to 47 are repeated with cp. on opposite side—1st cp. passing in front of 4th and back behind them ; 2nd cp. passing in front of 3rd and back behind them. (8 bars.)

49. The four gents. advance to the centre. 1st and 2nd gents. join right hands at height of shoulder ; 2nd and 3rd gents. do same across the others' hands.

The gents. dance around to their right until each is opposite his partner. (4 bars.) Release hands.

50. Each gent. turns sharply back to his left on left foot. Join left hands across, and dance around to left back to place. (4 bars.)

51. Each gent. (still holding left hands) takes partner's left hand in his right, and continues to dance around with her to his left until each cp. reach their place again.

Gents. release each other's hands and swing partner with both hands in place. (8 bars.)

52. Each cp. clasp right hands. The lady remains in her place, but the gent. dances the "seven" as follows : -

1st gent. to place of 3rd gent.

2nd gent. to that of 4th gent.

3rd gent. to that of 1st gent.

4th gent. to that of 2nd gent.

The gents. in dancing this pass each other back to back—1st and 2nd gents, facing outwards and 2nd and 3rd inwards. (2 bars.)

53. As each gent. finishes the "seven" he clasps left hands with the lady to whose place he has danced—1st gent. clasping hands with 3rd lady and so on.

The eight dancers will by this movement have become formed into two separate rings (1st and 3rd cps. forming one ring, 2nd and 4th another), in each of which the gents, having their backs to each other, face outwards, and the ladies face inwards to each other.

Whilst in this position all dance the "two threes." (2 bars.)

54. Each gent. releases partner's hand and turns round the lady whose left hand he is holding. Releases her hand. Crosses back to partner (passing to left of gent. around whose partner he had turned) and takes her right hand,—makes a half-turn with her in place (4 bars) and releases her hand.

55. 1st and 4th gents. cross to each other's places, each gent. on the way keeping to his right.

1st and 4th ladies follow suit, the ladies keeping to their left. (4 bars.)

56. Couples return to place as in movement 55. (4 bars.)

The 2nd and 3rd couples dancing movements 55 and 56 at the same time as the other two cps. the body of the reel is completed.

#### *1st Figure.*

57. 1st gent. takes partner's left hand in his right. 2nd cp. do likewise.

The two cps. advance to each other (2 bars) and retire (2 bars).

58. Each cp. join both hands and swing in place. (4 bars.)

59. Still holding partner's two hands, 1st and 2nd cps. dance around each other and back to place. (8 bars.)

#### *2nd Figure.*

60. 1st and 2nd ladies clasp right hands in centre. Dance around to right. (4 bars.)

As they pass their partners the latter fall in, each

behind his partner, join right hands across the ladies' hands, and all four continue the dance around to right together. (4 bars.) Gents fall back to places.

61. 1st and 2nd ladies turn, each on her left foot, and dance back. (4 bars.) As they pass their partners the latter fall in again, each this time in front of his lady, and join left hands, and all four dance around to left to place. (4 bars.)

*3rd Figure.*

62. This figure is the same as the last, with the difference, that it is started by the gents taking hands first, and the ladies fall in each time in front of their partners. (16 bars.)

*Finish.*

63. The four cps. dance around as in the lead at the beginning of the reel (8 bars), but instead of changing hands and turning back as in the second part of the lead,

64. Each gent. takes both his partner's hands, and the cps. dance around after each other to place. (8 bars.)



## CHAPTER VII.

### **Eight Hand Reel (B.)**

DANCED BY FOUR COUPLES.

This is, perhaps, rather intricate, but very effective when danced well.

Those who are acquainted with the Eight Hand Jig,

described on page 34, will find no difficulty in dancing this.

Movement 69 is known as the "Half Chain."

In movement 70 and 71 all the gents turn at the same time as the ladies with whom they are dancing, but in the crossing to opposite lady the 1st and 2nd gents always cross first, the 3rd and 4th exchanging places immediately the other two have passed each other.

The Third Figure (movements 82 and 83) is a very old one, and is known as "The Figure Eight" from the course described by the lady.

*Positions.*—Similar to those in the previous Eight Hand Reel.

*Lead around.*—Same as in previous Eight Hand Reel.

#### *Body of Reel.*

65. Each gent. dances the "seven" to right behind his partner who dances in front of him to left (same as movement 3). (4 bars).

This brings 1st gent. between partner and 3rd lady, 3rd gent between partner and 2nd lady, 2nd gent. between partner and 4th lady, and 4th gent between partner and 1st lady—(2 bars).

66. All dance "two threes" (2 bars).

67. Gents again dance the "seven" to their right and ladies to left, each gent. thus passing behind the lady on his right. This will bring 1st gent. between 3rd and 2nd ladies, 3rd gent. between 2nd and 4th ladies, 2nd gent between 4th and 1st ladies, and 4th gent. between 1st and 3rd ladies—(2 bars).

68. All dance "two threes" (2 bars).

69. Each gent. clasps right hands with the lady now on his right (1st gent taking hand of 2nd lady and the others accordingly) and turns right around her, back in the direction from which he came. Releases her hand. This brings him face to face with the lady on his left (1st gent. with 3rd lady and so on) whose left hand he takes. Passes by her—releases her hand ; meets his partner, takes her right hand and turns her in place (8 bars).

70. Each gent. still retaining partner's right hand turns around her in place. Releases her hand. 1st gent. crosses to 2nd lady and clasps left hands with her, 2nd gent. simultaneously performing this movement with 1st lady. Immediately 1st and 2nd gents. have passed each other 3rd and 4th gents. cross to the lady opposite to them in similar fashion. Each gent. turns around the lady in her place, releases her hand, and gives right hand to lady on his right, whom he half turns in place. This will leave 1st gent. with 3rd lady facing 2nd gent. with 4th lady, and 3rd gent. with 2nd lady facing 4th gent. with 1st lady. (8 bars).

71. 1st and 2nd gents. cross to ladies now opposite them as in 70 (1st gent. to 4th lady, 2nd gent. to 3rd lady), taking left hand. 3rd and 4th gents. follow suit. Each gent. turns right around the lady in place and crosses home to partner, taking her right hand.

In this "going home," 1st and 2nd gents. pass to left of each other as do also 3rd and 4th gents. (8 bars).

72. Each couple clasp right hands. Release. Each gent passes to lady on his right (his partner passing to next gent. on her left) whose left hand he takes. Thus 1st gent. passes to 3rd lady, etc. Releases hands. Passes to next lady (1st gent to 2nd lady) with right hand.

Releases. Passes to next lady (1st gent. to 4th lady) whose left hand he takes. Releases. Passes to next lady (his partner) with right hand. Turns back with her in the direction from which he came, and each couple dance back together to place. (8 bars).

73 to 77. The same movements as 52 to 56. (16 bars).

*1st Fig.*

78. 1st couple join hands and dance the "seven" through 2nd cp., who dance separately to place of 1st cp. (2 bars).

79. 1st cp. still holding hands instead of dancing the "two threes" as usual, right and left foot alternately, dance them beginning twice with the same foot. To make it clearer. The gent. when he finishes the "seven," instead of jumping with his right foot foremost (the one) making a step with it (the two) and bringing up his left (the three) jumps with his left foot foremost (one) makes a step with it (two) and brings up the right (three) and repeats this.

His partner does exactly the same. This will cause the pair to turn right around for the purpose of going back to place, the gent. being in position to go back on the lady's side, and the lady on the gent's.

1st cp. then release hands. Meanwhile the 2nd cp. after dancing the "seven" to place of 1st dance the same "short threes" as the 1st cp. but without joining hands. This will, of course, cause them to reverse their positions also. (2 bars).

80. 2nd cp. join hands and dance back to place inside 1st cp. finishing with "two threes" just as 1st cp. had done, 1st cp. dancing the movements originally made by 2nd cp. (4 bars).

81. The second part of this figure is the same as movement 42. (8 bars).

*3rd Fig.*

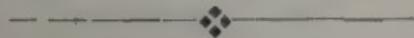
82. Same as movements 57 and 58. (8 bars).

83. The two couples advance again, 1st gent. passes his partner to his left between 4th cp., and 2nd gent. passes his partner between 3rd cp. 1st gent. turns to right and passes between 3rd cp., turning around 3rd gent. into his place, 2nd gent. making a similar movement with 4th cp. Meanwhile 1st lady after passing between 4th cp. turns to her left around 4th lady, crosses and passes between 2nd cp. turning to her right around 3rd gent, and so to her place, where her partner meets her, and swings her into place. 2nd lady simultaneously dances this figure by passing between 3rd couple, around 3rd lady, across and between 4th cp., and around 4th gent. (8 bars).

84. When the 3rd and 4th cps. dance this 3rd fig., 3rd gent. passes between 2nd cp., and 3rd lady passes first between 1st cp., and the 4th cp. accordingly.

*Finish.*

Same as previous Eight-Hand Reel.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### Sixteen-hand Reel.

DANCED BY EIGHT COUPLES.

An exceedingly jolly dance, especially for a large company.

An easy way to remember movements 88 and 90, is

that in 88 the leading cps. (the first four cps.) always circle with the cp. on their left, and in 90 with the cp. on their right.

In 92, leading gents. always link arms with gent. on left.

In this Reel the "figure" is danced *twice* before each "body."

The movements at the "lead" and "finish" have to be smart, because of the number dancing.

### *Positions.*

First four cps. as in Eight-hand Reel; 5th cp. between 1st and 3rd; 6th between 3rd and 2nd; 7th between 2nd and 4th; 8th between 4th and 1st.

This practically forms a circle of dancers.

### *Lead Around*

Same as Eight-hand Reel. All eight cps. taking part in it together. (16 bars).

### *Body of Reel.*

85. Each gent. dances the "seven" to right behind partner, who dances to left (movement 3) (2 bars).

86. All dance "two-threes" (2 bars).

87. All dance the "seven" back to place (gents. passing in front of partners) and "two threes." (4 bars).

88. Gents. take partners left hand in their right. 1st cp. join hands with 8th; 2nd with 6th; 3rd with

5th ; 4th with 7th, thus forming four circles of four, each of which dances around to left in place for 4 bars,—release hands,—each cp. swing in place for 4 bars. (8 bars).

89. Repeat movements 85, 86, and 87. (8 bars).

90. Form circles with cp. on opposite side ; 1st with 5th ; 2nd with 7th ; 3rd with 6th ; and 4th with 8th.

Repeat movement 88 (8 bars).

91. Grand chain, gents. going to right and ladies to left. Each gent. commences by taking partner's right hand in his, passing her, releasing hands, and clasping left hands with lady on his right—right hand to next lady, etc., (for instance, 1st gent. starts right to partner, left to 5th lady, right to 3rd lady, and so on), until he meets his partner, whose right hand he takes in his, and (the lady turning back with him) continues his dance around to place with her. Each gent. thus makes a complete circle, each lady a half-circle and return. (16 bars).

92. 1st gent. links right arms with 8th gent. ; 2nd with 6th ; 3rd with 5th ; 4th with 7th. Each pair of gents. twist around together, release arms, clasp left hand with lady whose partner they had locked arms with (thus, 1st gent. to 8th lady ; and 8th gent. to 1st lady), turn around her and cross home to partner (passing to left of other gent.) with right hand. (8 bars).

93. Release partner's hand and the couples cross right and left with cp. on opposite side (1st cp. with 5th ; 2nd with 7th, etc.), and return (similar movement to 55 and 56). (8 bars).

*1st Figure.*

1st Figure of 8-Hand Reel (A).

1st and 2nd cps. dance 1st Figure.

3rd and 4th cps. dance 1st Figure.

Dance body of reel.

5th and 7th cps. dance 1st Figure.

6th and 8th cps. dance 1st Figure.

Dance body of reel.

(NOTE.—The next Figures are danced by the various cps. in the same manner as the 1st Figure).

*2nd Figure.*

3rd Figure of 4-Hand Reel (B).

*3rd Figure.*

3rd Figure of 8-Hand Reel (A).

(NOTE.—In dancing this

94.      1st gent. passes between 5th cp.

2nd gent. passes between 7th cp.

1st lady first passes between 8th.

cp. then between 3rd cp.

2nd lady first passes between 6th.

cp. and then between 7th.

The positions of the 3rd and 4th cps. in passing, can be easily ascertained from the last two cps. movements.

95. 5th gent. passes between 3rd cp.  
 7th gent. passes between 4th cp.  
 5th lady first passes between 1st  
     cp., then between 3rd.  
 7th lady first passes between 2nd  
     cp., then between 4th.

The position of the 6th and 8th cps. in passing can  
 likewise be ascertained from the position of the last  
 two cps.)

*Finish.*

96. Same as in Eight-hand Reels. (16 bars).



## CHAPTER IX.

### **Twelve Hand Reel.**

Danced by six couples.

The same as the Sixteen-hand Reel, except in the  
 number of dancers.

*Positions.*

- 1st cp. at top.
- 2nd facing them.
- 3d on right of 1st.
- 4th on right of 3rd.
- 5th on right of 2nd.
- 6th on right of 5th.

97. In dancing movement 88, the 1st cp. make first  
 circle with 6th, 2nd with 5th, and 3rd with 4th.

In movement 92 the gents of the above cps. link  
 arms.

The figures are the same as those of the Sixteen-Hand Reel, but each figure is danced by each two couples in turn, as in the Eight-Hand Reels, the body of the reel coming in between each dancing of the figure.

For the figures the 1st cp. dance with the 2nd, the 3rd with the 5th, and the 4th with the 6th.



## CHAPTER X.

### **Four-Hand Jig.**

(HUMOURS OF BANDON.)

Tune ... ... "Humours of Bandon."

Danced by two couples, who face each other, as in the before described Four-Hand Reels.

This lively dance takes its name—"The Humours of Bandon"—from the tune to which it is danced. Owing to the shortness of the body and the consequent large number of figures, it affords plenty of variety.

Although seven figures are given here it will be found that, as a rule, the first four are sufficient. Very often, if the dance is prolonged, figures from the other dances in this book are introduced.

*Lead around* as in Four-Hand Reel.

#### *Body of Jig.*

98. Each gent. dances the "seven" (step 4) to right behind lady who dances to left as in movement 3. All "raise off" and "grind" (step 4)—(4 bars).

99. Side step back to place (gent. in front of lady), "raise off and grind" (4 bars).

100. Each gent. takes partner by both hands, swings her round once—releases hands—crosses to opposite gent.'s place (keeping to right whilst crossing),—ladies immediately cross to each other's places (keeping to left whilst crossing).

The cps. will by this movement change places.

The whole of movement 98, 99, and 100 are danced again, and will result in bringing each cp. back to their proper place.

### *Figures—*

(NOTE.—The body of the Jig is danced between each dancing of the figure as in the Four-Hand Reels.)

#### *1st Figure.*

*1st Figure* of Four-Hand Reel (B).

#### *2nd Figure.*

*2nd Figure* of Four-Hand Reel (B).

#### *3rd Figure.*

*3rd Figure* of Eight-Hand Reel (B).

101. In dancing this, the gent. leading puts his partner between the opposite cp. and passes to his place around the gent.

His partner after passing through the cp. turns to her left around the lady, passes between the cp. again, turns to her right around the gent., and so to place.

#### *4th Figure.*

*3rd Figure* of Four-Hand Reel (B).

(Only danced once).

*5th Figure.*

*3rd Figure of Four-Hand Reel (A).*

*6th Figure.*

*2nd Figure of Eight-Hand Reel (A).  
(Only danced once.)*

*7th Figure.*

*3rd Figure of Eight-Hand Reel (A).*

*Finish.*

Same as Four-Hand Reels.

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## CHAPTER XI.

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### **Eight-hand Jig (A).**

---

DANCED BY FOUR COUPLES.

An exceeding pretty dance.

It looks intricate, but the figures are really simple, and may be easily mastered.

In movement 106, the first two bars of the double of the "rising step" are often danced in place of the one here mentioned.

In movement 107 be sure you swing into your own place before forming the ring, or great confusion will arise.

In movement 108, gents. begin "set" to left and ladies to right. It has become popular to dance the

"rise and grind" (see step 4) instead of the "set" in this movement. The jig-stepping certainly gives more character to the dance.

*Positions.*

As in Eight-hand Reels.

*Lead Around.*

As in Eight-hand Reels.

*Body of Jig.*

102. Same as Movements 98 and 99, except that four couples are dancing.

103. Same as Movements 70 and 71.

104. Each gent. clasps right hands with partner. 1st gent turns his partner around once in her place, and the pair remain there side by side (lady on right of her partner), facing outwards from the circle, *i.e.*, their backs to 2nd cp.

3rd cp. similarly turn and fall into place behind 1st, facing in the same direction as them—gent. behind gent. and lady behind lady.

4th cp. similarly fall in behind 3rd, and

2nd behind 4th.

The four gents. will be in a file—1st gent. at top, 2nd gent at bottom.

The ladies will be similarly placed—(4 bars).

105. 1st gent. turns and marches to his left, and 1st lady to her right.

Gents. follow in order behind 1st gent ; and ladies behind 1st lady.

1st gent. meets his partner—they clasp right hands

and danee up to their place. The other cps. follow suit. All release hands, forming into two lines (ladies one side, gents. the other) facing each other as they do so. (4 bars).

106. All dance the "rise and grind" (see Step 4) twice.

107. Each gent. clasps partner's right hand and swings her round into place, making a turn and a half in doing so. As he completes the half-turn, he clasps left hands with the lady on his left. This makes a complete ring, the gents. facing outwards and the ladies in (4 bars).

Each dancer will be holding his or her partner's right hand, and 1st gent. will be holding left hands with 3rd lady, 2nd gent. with 4th lady, 3rd gent. with 2nd lady, and 4th gent. with 1st lady.

108. All "set" (Step 5) (4 bars).

109. Each gent. releases partner's hands, and turns right round lady whose right hand he holds, releases her, returns to partner with right hand (4 bars).

110. Same as movements 55 and 56 (8 bars).

*1st Figure.*

3rd Figure of Eight-hand Reel (B).

*2nd Figure.*

3rd Figure of Four-hand Reel (A).

*3rd Figure.*

111. 1st gent. clasps right hands with 4th lady, passes her, releases hands, locks left arm in left arm of her partner, the two gents. twist around, release arms.

1st gent. proceeds to 2nd cp. and repeats this, then to 3rd cp., then right hand to partner turning in place.

2nd gent. dances this figure commencing with 1st lady.

(When it is their turn to dance this figure),

112. 2nd gent. commences with 1st lady, and 4th gent. with 2nd lady.

*Finish.*

Same as Eight-hand Reels.



## CHAPTER XII.

### **Eight-Hand Jig (B.)**

("St. PATRICK'S.")

Tune "St. Patrick's Day" (double time).

This is a picturesque dance which deserves to be better known than it is. It derives its name, "St. Patrick's" from the tune to which it is danced.

For the benefit of those acquainted with English dancing I may say that movement 118 is the same as the Grand Chain of the Lancers.

Dancers, positions, and lead, same as in Eight-Hand Jig (A).

*Body of Jig.*

113. Same as Movement 102.

114. Each gent. clasps right hands with partner. Turns around her in place, 1st and 4th gents. cross

(keeping to right) to each others places, their ladies following suit (keeping to left). 2nd and 3rd cps. exchange places at same time as 1st and 4th.

115. All repeat movements 113 and 114, which will bring them back to original places.

116. Each gent. clasps right hands with partner, releases, crosses and clasps left hands with lady on his right (1st gent. with 3rd lady), turns right around her in place, releases her hand, returns to partner with right hand, half turns her in place, releases her hand, crosses to lady on left (1st gent. to 4th lady), clasps left hands, turns right around her in place, returns to partner, whom he turns in place.

117. Dance movements 65 to 69, taking care (as this is a jig) to dance the "rise and grind" instead of the "two threes."

118. Grand Chain as in 16 Hand Reel (movement 91) except that instead of lady turning back with partner when she meets him, she passes, and the chain is continued until they meet second time, which will be in place.

*1st Figure.*

1st Figure of Eight-Hand Reel (A).

*2nd Figure.*

3rd Figure of Four-Hand Reel (B).

*3rd Figure.*

3rd Figure of Four-Hand Reel (A).

*Finish.*

Same as Eight-Hand Reels.

## CHAPTER XIII.

**Country Dance (A).**

Jig Time.

A merry dance, the figures of which may be learnt in a few minutes. Always popular where there is a large number of people.

It is the simplest dance described in this work.

Danced by four or any larger number of couples.

The dancers form two lines—ladies one line, gents. the other—facing each other; each person standing opposite partner. Gents' left side and ladies' right being to top of room.

119. The four dancers at top of lines, or say, 1st and 2nd couples (the numbering, although unnecessary in this dance, may be described as running in proper order from the top right down the line) at the commencement of the music “set” (step 5)—(4 bars).

120. First gent, clasps right hands with 2nd lady; 2nd gent and 1st lady follow suit across the other's hands. All four dance round to right to place, as in first part of movement 27 (4 bars).

121. “Set” again (4 bars).

122. Join left hands as in 120, and turn to left to place (4 bars).

123. First gent, takes partner's right hand in his left and leads her down the lane formed by the two lines of

dancers (4 bars), releases her hand, turns (gent. turning to left on left foot, and his partner to right on right), joining hands (lady's left in gent.'s right), dance back together, release hands; 1st lady turns to left around 2nd lady and back in between her and 3rd lady, 1st gent. meanwhile turning to right around 2nd gent., and back between him and 3rd gent (4 bars).

124. 2nd couple join both hands, 1st couple do the same, and the two cps. dance around each other for 8 bars at the finish of which partners release hands, and all fall into line again, this time, however, with 1st cp. in the place originally occupied by 2nd cp., who will now be top of the line.

This constitutes the whole body of the dance, which then proceeds as follows :—1st cp. dance it with 3rd cp. (on returning from "leading down" passing around 3rd cp. and between them and 3rd cp.), and on finishing fall into line next 4th cp., 3rd cp. falling into line next 2nd.

The order from the top of the line will now be :—

2nd cp.  
3rd cp.  
1st cp.  
4th cp.

It will be seen that 1st cp. have changed two places, having danced the "body" twice.

The next time, however, four couples dance instead of two, 2nd dancing with 3rd, and 1st with 4th. At the "lead down" 2nd cp. follow 1st, and return in front of them, 2nd cp. turning around 3rd, and 1st around 4th.

When this has been finished the four couples have

changed a place again, 1st and 2nd cps being one place further down the line, and 3rd and 4th one place higher up.

This continues until the whole line is dancing.

First cp. on reaching bottom of line can either fall out or stay in their place and return up the line, and each cp. who reach the bottom of the line have a similar option.

It must be remembered that after each dancing of the body each couple dancing have changed a place, those going up the line (to gents. left) one higher up, and those going down, one lower down.

Only those going down the line can "lead down."

Each couple who reach the top or bottom of the line have a rest of one "body" (32 bars) before joining in the dance again.

If there are a large number of dancers, it is advisable to divide them into lines of six couples each, otherwise some will get far more dancing than others ; the couple who start first have the biggest share.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### **Country Dance (B.)**

Tune : "Rocky Road to Dublin."

Not very well known, but very taking to the eye when properly performed.

The step is the same as that used in the Slip-jig,

described in the next chapter, except that on the 4th bar there is no turning of the body as in the latter dance. If the dance is to be continued in the same direction for the next four bars, dance the same step for the 4th bar as for the previous three. If it is necessary to reverse, merely beat time on the 4th bar.

Recollect that the description given herein constitutes the whole of this dance. There is no leading up or down, or passing behind next cps. as in the other country dance.

The number of dancers and positions are the same as in Country Dance (A).

125. 1st gent. and 2nd lady join right hands; 2nd gent. and 1st lady do same across them. All four dance Slip-Jig Step (see next chapter), commencing with left foot, around to left to place. (4 bars). Release hands, turn, join-left hands, and dance back. (4 bars).

126. Release hands, but continue to dance in same direction. (4 bars). Turn and dance back again (without joining hands). (4 bars).

127. All four join hands forming a ring, and continue to dance in same direction, to left (4 bars), turn (without releasing hands), and dance around in opposite direction (4 bars), release hands.

128. Partners take both hands, and the cps. dance around each other for 8 bars, all then falling into line, 1st next 3rd.

This constitutes the whole of the dance which 1st cp. dances with each cp. in turn, until the whole line is dancing, as in Country Dance (A).

## CHAPTER XV

**Slip (or Hop) Jig.**

Tune, "Rocky Road to Dublin," or similar (Nine-Eight Time Music).

This is a delightful measure. When well danced it would be hard to find its equal for grace and "joyousness" of motion.

It is the only two-handed dance described in this work, and, in my humble opinion, the best of the dozen. It is danced by two persons—lady and gent.—who stand opposite each other.

They commence with what I may call (to avoid confusing the lay reader with technical terms) the "body step," as it is danced in between every one of the numbered steps hereinafter described in the same way as the "bodies" of the other dances are danced in between their figures.

The "body step" is as follows:—Step forward on the right foot (one), bring the left up behind it (two), make a little jump landing on the right toe, and bring the left down immediately (three, four).

A distinct beat is given for the one and for the two, but the "three, four" is done in almost one beat, so, 1,—2,—3, 4. When the tune is heard this step will be easily understood.

This is the 1st bar. The 2nd and 3rd bars are

similar. On the 4th bar step with right foot (one), step on left toe, then on right (three, four), and again (four, five). As you make these movements turn to your right, keeping your weight on the right leg. This will cause you to turn on that leg as on a pivot, and will bring you facing back to your place (1 bar)=(4 bars). Dance same step back to place with left foot leading, and turn in place on your left.

This will leave you in position for the 1st step described below.

Recollect that the "body step" is danced in between each of the others.

The steps are danced at the same time by both dancers. Eight bars to a step.

### *1st Step.*

130. Jump, coming down with right foot foremost (one), take step sideways with right (two), bring left up to it (three) (like "short three" of Four-hand Reel), repeat again with right foot, and again (3 bars) raise on the balls of the feet, and shuffle on to heels to left (one), then to right (two), then to left (three) (1 bar)=4 bars.

Dance this step to left, shuffling to right first on 4th bar (4 bars).

### *2nd Step.*

131. Jump, coming down on left foot and right toe (one), jump, coming down on left foot and right heel (two), jump, again coming down on left foot and right toe (1 bar).

132. Hop to left on right toe (one), again, this time

bring left toe to ground behind right (two, three), and repeat last two (four, five) (2nd bar).

133. Repeat 131 and 132, jumping on right foot and left toe first, and coming back to right (3rd and 4th bars).

134. Repeat 131, 132, and 133 (4 bars).

*3rd Step.* (Double of 2nd.)

After dancing 131.

135. Dance it again on left toe and right foot, and again on right toe and left foot, and then dance 132 (4 bars).

Repeat 135 with opposite foot (4 bars).

*4th Step.*

136. Place right foot at back of left a little across it, right toe almost touching left side of left heel. Jump, landing on toes of both feet (still retaining above position) (one), hop on left foot (without moving out of place) at same time bringing right foot to the height of and in front of left knee (two), hop again, landing on both toes, right foot being placed down across left, with right toe nearly touching left side of left toe (three) (1 bar).

137. Dance 132 (1 bar).

138. Repeat 136 and 137, beginning on opposite foot (2 bars).

139. Repeat 136, 137, and 138 (4 bars).

*5th Step.* (Double of 4th.)

140. After dancing 136, begin again on left foot (which will be at back of right), and again on right,

and repeat the various movements for doubling as 3rd step is doubled.

*6th Step. (Double of a simple Step.)*

141. Hop on left toe with right foot upraised in front - about height of left knee (one), fall on to right toe with left foot off ground behind (two), fall on to left toe with right off ground in front (three) (1 bar).

Repeat twice (2 bars).

Dance 132 (1 bar).

142. Repeat 141, beginning with other foot.

*Finish*

With "body step."



## CHAPTER XVI.

### **Another Finish**

Which may be used in the Eight-hand Dances, and is very attractive, is the following :—

The four ladies advance to centre, join right hands, and turn around to place, where they release hands and fall back to place. (4 bars.)

The four gents. do the same with left hands. (4 bars.)

Each gent. takes both of his partner's hands in his—right in right, left in left (the hands will thus be

crossed with right hands underneath)—and the four steps dance around to left to place. (8 bars.)

On the 6th bar the gent. turns his partner to the left under his arms bringing right hands uppermost by the finish.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### **Stray Notes.**

Dance with the body held lightly, the head erect but not stiffly so, the chest expanded, the shoulders back, the arms hanging easily by the sides (it is not necessary to spread out the fingers fan fashion, nor to clench the fists), and the legs slightly bent at the knee.

The chief secret of any dancing is to know when to change the weight of the body from one foot to the other. A little practice will enable this knowledge to be acquired.

Don't dance on the whole of your foot.

Don't dance with your toes pointing skywards. They will do that when you are dead. Swell the instep a trifle (not ostentatiously so) and the toes will naturally point downwards.

Some people dance with considerable effort, looking as though the exercise were hard labour. Avoid that error. A dance room is a place for jollity, and if it hurts you to dance you'd better sit down.

If you happen to be a better dancer than your companions in the set don't make the fact apparent by

executing fancy steps at every possible opportunity. They won't admire it, they'll think you conceited.

Dance the measure announced. Don't spoil the uniformity of the dance by performing something else even if is more difficult. After a country dance has been called I've seen a line dancing it, whilst in another part of the room a jig was going on, in another part an eight-hand jig, and in another a little company were making a gallant effort to struggle through an eight-hand reel! If the dance you want is not on the programme ask for it ; if not known by the company present, it will be appreciated as an exhibition.

(These remarks are not intended to apply to practices).

Don't hug your partner round the waist English fashion. When swinging hold her hands only. A bow to your partner at the end of a dance would not be amiss, but be careful to avoid any straining after "deportment." Leave that to the Seóníni. In short be natural, unaffected, easy—be Irish, and you'll be all right.



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